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A Proactive Approach with a Holistic View for Sustainable Watershed Management, 28 PM 3: 26

A Proposal to the CalFed Category III Steering Committee
by
California State University, Chico
and
Cherokee Watershed Group

# I. Executive Summary

This project will provide CalFed with a monitoring program that will result in improvements to water quality for direct environmental benefits. There is a need to develop an existing conditions inventory and ongoing monitoring program for the Cherokee Watershed addressing water issues for both surface and ground water. The purpose of this project is to create an *Existing Conditions Report* (ECR) combined with historical data from local, state, and federal agencies to establish base line water quality information for the Cherokee Watershed. By establishing community outreach programs the Cherokee Watershed Group and California State University, Chico will compile all available information into a management and monitoring program that works to protect, restore and enhance the watershed ecosystem.

Agricultural uses combined with existing and proposed urban development negatively affect water quality and quantity within the Cherokee Watershed. It is critical that water quantity and quality of surface flows, natural springs and groundwater not be degraded or reduce so as to ensure a healthy ecosystem while at the same time maintaining adequate levels for human economic and social well-being.

The proposed project works to restore an ecologically healthy watershed and improve water management for beneficial uses of the ecosystem through the completion and implementation of six primary tasks including: (1) development of an existing conditions report; (2) establishing base-linea water quality information for surface and ground water, (3) encourage outreach activities that increases overall public awareness, (4) participate in education and information sharing at watershed conferences, (5) develop a management plan to be used for the planning of future projects, land use changes, and habitat needs assessment, and (6) expand the management and monitoring program within the second year of its establishment.

In keeping with CalFed's mission, this project will contribute to the protection and enhancement of the Bay-Delta ecosystem by accomplishing the following goals:

- developing an Existing Conditions Report examining water quality issues,
- monitoring and maintaining good water quality for all beneficial uses,
- improve and increase, where possible, priority habitats through the implementation of a program to maintain, improve and restore the watershed, and
- reduce the risk to land use and associated economic activities and water supply by providing a long-term water quality management and monitoring program.

The specific activities and elements to be funded by this grant would be to supplement the personnel services, operating expenses, and professional and consultant services. CSUC faculty would focus on coordination of the project through the Project Director and on specific elements such as land use, water quality, recreational activities, agricultural use, and mapping services. The Project Manager would assist in the coordination of the evaluation process and public involvement through the Cherokee Watershed Group and other public and private interests in the watershed. Staff, student assistants, and volunteers would contribute to acquiring information, increasing public involvement, and developing specific watershed education activities to achieve the Cherokee Watershed Group's objectives. Long-term management would be the responsibility of local, state, and federal agencies, Butte County, irrigation districts, landowners, conservation groups, educational institutions and interested individuals concerned with protecting the resource.

There are two Phases that would be funded by this grant. Phase I of the project accomplishes the following Tasks:

- Task 1: Preparation of the Existing Conditions Report for the Cherokee Watershed.
- Task 2: Establishment base-line water quality data.
- Task 3: Community Outreach Activities including the preparation of an Outreach Booklet and Video and attendance to watershed conferences for information sharing.
- Task 4: Develop a water quality management and monitoring program that would serve as a tool for the long-term watershed decisions pertaining to future projects, land use changes and habitat needs assessment. This plan would address issues including: surface and ground water quality, agricultural drainage, mine drainage, and municipal wastewater treatment.

Phase II will depend on the base of programs and tasks established in Phase I.

Task 5: Review and Expand. This Task allows for the review and expansion of the water quality database, continued outreach activities, and update of the management and monitoring program to address changing priorities within the watershed.

The Research Foundation would act as the lead consultant in assisting the Cherokee Watershed Group. Working with local groups to protect and enhance local creeks and watersheds is a high priority at California State University, Chico. Toward this end, faculty and other university resources, conservation groups, public agencies, and others are utilized as needed. It is the policy of the University Research Foundation, as a part of its community service mission, to organize teams for special projects.

The Cherokee Watershed Group is still in its infancy. Primarily made of up landowners within the watershed that volunteer their time, the group has been able to identify issues, set goals and objectives, and determine a starting point for the future management of the Cherokee Watershed. Because the Cherokee Watershed is located within the Butte Creek Watershed, which is a priority project for the area, the Cherokee Group realizes that a coordinated management effort is imperative.

# A Proactive Approach with a Holistic View for Sustainable Watershed Management

# Proposal to the CalFed Category III Steering Committee

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California State University, Chico, The Research Foundation

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Type of Organization:

**Non-Profit Corporation** 

Tax Identification Number:

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Participants/Collaborators:

Cherokee Watershed Group, California State University Chico, Butte Creek Watershed Conservancy, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Water Resources, California Department of Fish and Game, Pacific Gas and Electric, Butte County Planning and

Development Department, Nature Conservancy.

Project Group Type 3: Services.

# **III. Project Description**

# Project Description and Approach

This project will be a cooperative effort between watershed landowners, interested citizen groups, and state, local, and federal agencies; administered by California State University, Chico (CSUC) to develop an Existing Conditions Report (ECR) establishing base line water quality information leading to a monitoring program to maintain, improve and restore an ecologically healthy Cherokee Watershed.

The project will involve several areas of water quality concerns including: increased contaminant loads caused by urban runoff, agricultural runoff, wastewater treatment, urban development, recreational use and other point and non-point pollution sources.

In addition, the project will develop outreach programs, participate in watershed conferences that educate and inform interested parties of the importance of maintaining a healthy watershed, and prepare a comprehensive water quality monitoring program that will be used in planning the future of the watershed.

# Location and/or Geographic Boundaries of Project

The Cherokee Watershed is located in the Butte Basin of the Bay-Delta System. It is also a significant tributary to Butte Creek. Another program within the Butte Basin, the Butte Creek Watershed Project, is considered a priority project by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, CalFed, the Bureau of Reclamation and California Department of Fish and Game.

The watershed is broken into two distinct areas: the upper watershed known as Dry Creek and the lower watershed which is Cherokee Creek. Presently, participation in the Cherokee Watershed Group is primarily made up of landowners from the Cherokee Creek area. However, the Cherokee Group hopes to expand its membership and monitoring program to include residents throughout the watershed boundary.

The upper watershed begins in the Town of Paradise in Butte County and moves in a southwesterly direction through Butte County and a small section of Sutter County. Cherokee Creek flows into Butte Creek in the Butte Sink near the Sutter Buttes.

## **Expected Benefits**

#### Primary Stressors:

Agricultural uses have been part of the Cherokee Watershed's history. This, combined with existing and proposed urban development within the watershed, negatively affects water quality and quantity issues.

- Water management: adverse water quality conditions
- Floodplain and marshplain changes: urbanization, agriculture, grazing
- Channel form changes: channelization, riparian encroachment, bank armoring, loss of riparian zone and lack of regeneration potential
- · Water quality: increased contaminants, increased nutrient or carbon input
- Land use: urbanization, mining, agricultural practices
- Human disturbance

# Priority Habitats and/or Species:

Longstanding watershed residents have observed that the health of the watershed has been degraded and attribute this decline to changes in water quality and quantity. The fact that there is no existing conditions inventory or monitoring program for the Cherokee Watershed threatens the health of this riverine ecosystem and economic well-being of landowners within the watershed.

- · Seasonal wetland and aquatic habitats
- Instream aquatic habitat
- Shaded riverine aquatic habitat
- · Agricultural wetlands and perennial grasslands
- Migratory birds

Historically Cherokee Creek and Dry Creek once supported anadromous fish populations, however, to what extent is unknown. The primary stressors listed above contributed to the loss of these species within the creek and threatens the future loss of other priority habitats.

In addition, waterfowl are a significant component of the ecosystem, are of high interest to recreational hunters and bird watchers, and contribute to California's economy. Due to the type of agricultural practices associated with the Cherokee Watershed, the potential for restoration and enhancement of migratory birds' habitat within the area is high.

In keeping with CalFed's mission, this project will contribute to the development of a comprehensive plan that will work to restore the ecological health and improve water management for the Bay-Delta System. Particularly this project works to manage and provide the following: (1) create an Existing Conditions Report, (2) improve water quality for all beneficial uses, (3) improve and increase, where possible, priority habitats by implementing a program to maintain, improve and restore the watershed, and (4) reduce the environmental risks to land use, associated economic activities and water supply by providing a coordinated water quality monitoring program.

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**CALFED Category III Proposal** 

## Background and Biological/Technical Justification

As human population increases and the demand for water increases locally and state wide, increasing responsibility has been placed in the public's hands to assist in the effective management of the environment and resources to prevent degradation that permanently alters and damages watersheds. Presently, there is little or no scientific data for the Cherokee Watershed upon which to base sound management policies.

There are several proposed land use changes and water projects that will dramatically affect the Cherokee Watershed, these projects include: (1) a new town, Central Buttes, which would house approximately 6000 residential dwellings with a commercial and light industrial economic base, (2) the pumping of groundwater for water sales to areas outside the Butte Basin, this would be sponsored by the Department of Water Resources Supplemental Water Sale Program, and (3) a possible proposal for the excavation and construction of a debris dam to create an artificial wetland and sediment basin during flood periods.

It is critical that water quantity and quality of surface flows, natural springs, and groundwater not be degraded or reduced so as to ensure a healthy environment for natural fauna and flora while maintaining adequate levels for human economic and social well-being. The Cherokee Watershed Group proposes an approach to ensure a healthy ecosystem by compiling credible annual reports from water quality monitoring and historical records. In turn, this information will be used to assist in the planning of future development projects, land use changes and habitat needs assessments within the watershed. Similar approaches, suggested by CalFed, that achieve the same objectives include: (1) establishing a comprehensive water quality monitoring and assessment program to identify problems and assess the effectiveness of corrective measures and (2) coordinate watershed water quality activities related to contaminant reduction to develop solutions to water quality problems affecting the ecosystem.

The proposed project works to restore an ecologically healthy watershed and improve water management for beneficial uses of the ecosystem through the implementation of various actions including the following: develop an existing conditions report, collect water quality data for surface and ground water, focus educational activities to increase overall public awareness, encourage outreach activities with interested parties, and educate local governments on the value of natural habitats to improve planning to protect these areas.

The Cherokee Watershed Group is still in its infancy. Made of up landowners within the watershed that volunteer their time, the group has been able to identify important issues, set goals and objectives, and determine a starting point for the future management of the Cherokee Watershed. The group's participants realize that there is a need for a coordinated management effort throughout the watershed including members from both the upper and lower portions of the watershed. There are various private organizations and local, state and federal agencies that have an interest in the watershed, some these agencies include: PG& E, Butte County Planning Department, Department of Water Resources, and Department of Fish and Game. Because the Cherokee Watershed is located within the Butte Creek Watershed, which is a priority project for the area, the Cherokee Group realizes that a coordinated management effort is imperative.

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# Proposed Scope of Work

The specific activities and elements to be funded by this grant would be to supplement the personnel services, operating expenses, and professional and consultant services. Long-term management would be the responsibility of participating government agencies, irrigation districts, landowners, conservation groups, educational institutions and interested individuals concerned with protecting the resource.

Task 1: Create an Existing Conditions Report for surface and ground water quality and quantity of the Cherokee Watershed. Establish and implement a process of identifying the available information, data gaps, and unresolved issues. Create a mapping database that will be used for future monitoring and management programs. As part of the project the Cherokee Watershed Group and CSUC would develop a list of interested parties to be invited to participate in the project and Group. Timeline: Winter, 1997.

Task 2: Collect water quality information which would serve as the base-line data for the management and monitoring program (Task 5). This information would include the measurement of the following: stream flows and water quality on a monthly basis, water quality in agricultural and domestic wells, and ground water level fluctuations. Timeline: Begin sampling in Winter, 1997.

Task 3: Develop an outreach program to ensure a continued interest in understanding the elements and importance of maintaining watershed health. This outreach and educational program would include all interested parties and stakeholders with particular focus on public awareness, agricultural interests, and local governments. The product of this task would be an Outreach Educational Booklet, video and conference attendance. Timeline: Spring, 1998; part of Task 6, review and expand in one year.

Task 4: Develop a management plan required to produce a comprehensive, flexible tool for the long-term management of the watershed for human and natural processes. This plan would include annual reports from water quality monitoring, data collection and other records which would be used by any interested party or agency to plan for future projects, land use changes, habitat needs assessment, or any issue where scientific data is required to make logical and long-term decisions which may affect part or all of the Cherokee Watershed. Timeline: Spring, 1998; part of Task 6, review and expand in one year.

Task 5: Expand and review the monitoring program during the second year of its establishment this would include: reviewing the conditions of the watershed, increasing the number of water quality sampling sites, updating educational and informational materials, and inventorying the status of proposed projects and land use changes within the watershed. Timeline: Spring, 1999.

#### Monitoring and Data Evaluation

The Existing Conditions Report includes the following steps: (a) literature review - collecting and analyzing all known published and unpublished information about the project area; (b) data gap analysis - compare data found in the literature review to the actual data necessary to support an ongoing monitoring program; and (c) trend assessment - documentation and forecasts of land use changes, water demand, agricultural production, environmental law, and other related issues. California State University, Chico will act as the lead agency for expertise, advice, and assistance in all areas of the project including planning, budgeting, installing, collecting, recording and compiling data into useable and credible reports.

The water quality and quantity monitoring portion of the project includes determining appropriate monitoring stations, purchasing and installing continuous monitoring systems in agricultural and domestic wells, measuring Dry Creek and Cherokee Creek stream flow monthly and water quality twice a year, and identify and measure static and pumping water levels in wells on a monthly basis.

The development of the monitoring program will be based upon the information compiled in the Existing Conditions Report and water quality monitoring data collection. These tasks will lead to the establishment of goals and objectives for the long-term management of the Cherokee Watershed. Included in this monitoring program will be a review of the CalFed Mission as summarized in the Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan for the Bay-Delta and, in particular, the Butte Basin Ecological Zone. This review is important in order to ensure that the proposed water quality monitoring program is consistent and integrated with the concepts set forth by CalFed.

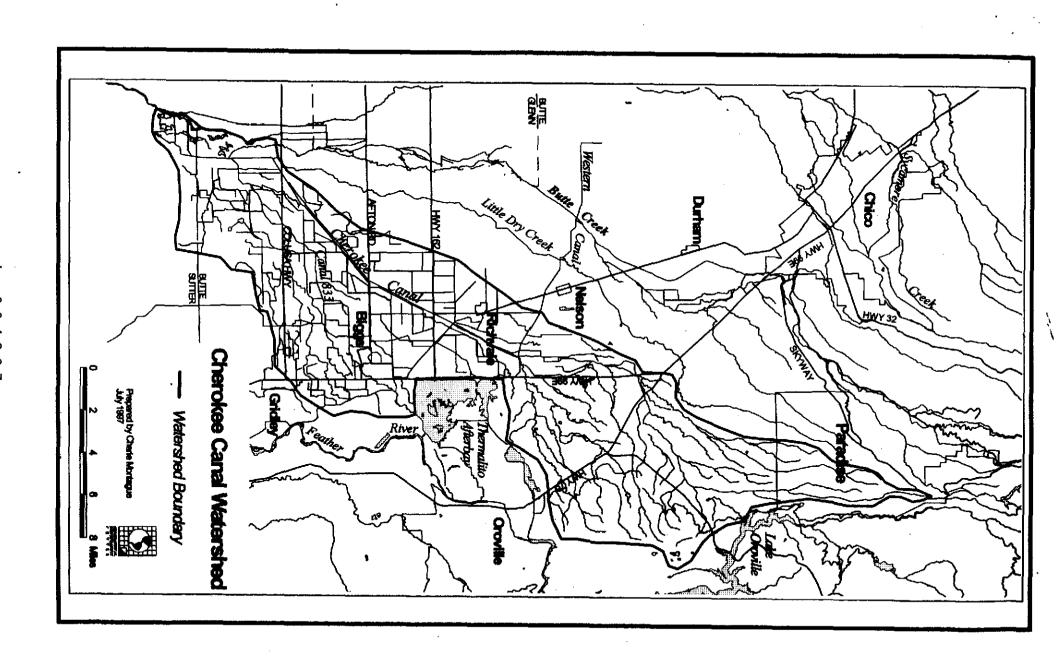
There are various alternatives and restoration actions that can be taken to accomplish the objectives of the Cherokee Watershed Group and CalFed. The *Technical Team Reports Stressors and Sample Restoration Actions* summary has been reviewed and it was concluded that the proposed project's Existing Conditions Report, water quality monitoring program, outreach and educational programs, and proactive approach for a sustainable watershed are consistent with the Category III program.

There is the potential that the information collected for the Cherokee Watershed, for both existing conditions and water quality, can be utilized by other watershed management projects, in particular the Butte Creek Watershed Project. To prevent overlapping of data collection and monitoring programs, watershed projects within the region will be contacted to establish a coordinated plan for the Butte Basin. This coordinated effort will allow for the review of monitoring and data evaluation by a wide range of participants with the overall goal of maintaining, improving and restoring an ecologically healthy watershed.

#### <u>Implementability</u>

Cherokee Watershed Group and CSUC Research Foundation are prepared for the immediate implementation of the listed tasks that work toward maintaining and improving water quality for all beneficial uses.

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# IV. Costs and Schedule to Implement Proposed Project

Because the Cherokee Watershed Group is still in its infancy the information collected and effort put forth to date has been on a strictly volunteer basis. The proposed project meets CalFed's mission in that it works toward the maintenance, improvement, and restoration of a healthy watershed.

When necessary and applicable, assistance in planning, collecting and compiling data will be sought from various agencies including: California Department of Fish and Game, Department of Water Resources, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

Figure 1 identifies the budgeted costs for the proposed project's five primary tasks over a two year timeframe.

## **Milestones**

Once funding for the proposed project has been secured, work on Task 1- Existing Conditions Report will begin. Task 2 - Water Quality Monitoring, Task 3 - Outreach Program will progress simultaneously throughout the year. Upon completion of the Existing Conditions Report, work will begin on Task 4- Water Quality Management and Monitoring Program. After information has been collected throughout the first year, project proponents will begin Task 5 - Expand and Review. This task will be a compilation of the scientific data collected and other information gathered throughout the previous year.

Significant milestones will be the completion of an existing conditions inventory with the establishment of goals and objectives for the development of base-line information for the Cherokee Watershed. The most important milestone will be the improved water quality and quantity of both surface and ground water insuring a healthy environment for the ecosystem while maintaining adequate levels for economic and social well-being.

#### Third Party Impacts

It is in the watershed's best interest that the Cherokee Watershed Group was formed. The establishment of goals and objectives will help protect and improve the economics, ecology, and social lifestyle in all parts of the watershed. In order to have significant results, a cooperative effort with a holistic view of the watershed will be taken. It is the intent of this project that when the tasks are completed that the Cherokee Watershed Group has expanded its membership to include all interested parties. All impacts from this project will be positive. No mitigation will be required.

Figure 1 Budgeted Costs for Year 1 of the Project								
Project Phase and Task	Direct Labor Hours	Direct Salaries and Benefits	Overhead Labor	Service Contracts	Materials and Contracts	Miscell. Direct Costs	Total Costs	
Task 1: ECR	864	18283	3657	3500	12050	3110	40600	
Task 2: Water Quality Monitoring.	621	9940	1988	1500	52450	10790	76668	
Task 3: Outreach	455	7655	1531		3950	790	13926	
Task 4: Management & Monitoring Plan	508	9835	1967	1500	1350	570	15222	
Task 5: Review & Expand in year 2.	558	9123	1843	1500	11600	2620	26686	
TOTAL						\$	173,102	

# V. Applicant Qualifications - Watershed Management

Working with local groups to protect and enhance local creeks and watersheds is a high priority at California State University, Chico. Toward this end, faculty and other university resources, conservation groups, public agencies, and others are utilized as needed. It is the policy of the University Research Foundation, as a part of its community service mission, to organize teams for special projects and to provide the kinds of services described below.

<u>Project Administration</u>: The Research Foundation, as part of its regular operation, searches for government and foundation funding opportunities, makes contact with those organizations, and provides assistance in grant proposal writing. Foundation personnel then administer the grant funds, provide auditing and bookkeeping functions, and ensure compliance with all government regulations and procedures.

<u>Faculty</u>: The primary mission of our faculty is teaching our own students. However, with funds generated from grants and contracts, our faculty often undertake research, planning, and other community-based projects. In addition, faculty can also be of service by supervising interns and conducting class projects that relate to the mission of the watershed protection groups. Environmental education faculty are also available to assist local school teachers in creating and teaching curriculum about our region's diverse natural environments. Resumes of faculty members who have particular expertise in watershed research and planning are available upon request.

<u>Department, Institutes, Centers and Laboratories</u>: Special units of the university are often organized and called upon to address specific community and regional needs. In addition to the more obvious administrative units, such as the Department of Geography and Planning, there are others that could be called on to fill specific needs, such as the Department of Communication Design and Journalism, which can produce informational material such as newsletters, videos, and press releases. The Geographic Information Center (GIC) has the capability of collecting and compiling public domain maps through the internet as well as producing GIS maps on request.

<u>Internships and Class Projects</u>: Other possible resources are community-based internships supervised by several of the departments and faculty. In the past, interns have gained personal knowledge and skills while providing community service in environmental monitoring, report writing, field mapping, GIS mapping, interviewing of informants, documentary research, plan design, and questionnaire design and administration.

# **CSUC Local Watershed Project Experience:**

- Fiscal agent and project director for Deer Creek Watershed Planning Project.
- Fiscal agent for Big Chico Creek Alliance watershed and management grants.
- Fiscal agent and project director for Butte Creek watershed planning and management grants.
- Collaborating on grant proposals with the following Watershed Conservancies:
  - Reeds Creek, Feather River, Mill Creek and Truckee River

## Mapping:

The Geographical Information Center (GIC) at Califronia State University, Chico, was established in 1988 to introduce digital mapping technology to the region and to provide valuable on-the-job training and employment opportunities for our students. The Center's mission is both academic and service oriented. While the training and eventual placement of students is the key aspect and reason for the Center, the development of the GIC has resulted in a renewed University commitment to strengthen ties to the public and private sector of the North State.

Our primary areas of expertise include cartography, remote sensing, and geographical information systems (GIS). Contracts are administered through the University Foundation, providing both direct contracts and interagency agreements.

A partial list of recent GIS contracts related to resources mapping is listed below:

- Sacramento River Stream Corridor Protection Program Phases 1-4.
- Butte, Deer, and Battle Creek Conservancy Mapping.
- Tehama County Vernal Pool Mapping.
- Cantara Watershed Mapping.
- Northern Sacramento Valley Sustainable Landscapes Project.

#### **Project Personnel**

Dr. Donald Holtgrieve, Project Director, Professor of Geography and Planning, CSUC. He teaches courses in water resources and environmental planning. Dr. Holtgrieve has been the recipient of many grants and awards, with a particular focus on the environment, specifically water quality and watershed management. He has extensive experience in directing grants awarded by both State and Federal Agencies, as well as official certification in Land use, Transportation, and Wetlands Planning. Dr. Holtgrieve has supervised over 200 projects over the last 25 years. As Project Director, Dr. Holtgrieve will provide assurance that adequate resources are provided to the project, and will be the first line of communication between CalFed Category III and CSU, Chico.

Gary Cole, Project Manager, has lived within the Cherokee Watershed for 25 years and has been an integral part of the local community as both a teacher and farmer. His personal interest and attendance at other watershed project meetings in the area led him to the founding of the Cherokee Watershed Group in order to take a more active role in his immediate area. Mr. Cole will act as the liaison between the Research Foundation and watershed landowners and interested parties. He will play a key role in the establishment of the outreach activities and monitoring program.

Kamie Polo, Project Assistant, earned her Master of Rural and Town Planning degree in 1997, having already developed research and writing skills in the fields of planning and geography. She possesses excellent organizational and managerial skills developed through experience with local government and citizen groups. She has experience in assisting on the management of projects for both private consulting firms and California State University Research Foundation. As Project Assistant, Mrs. Polo will work with the project's director and manager to ensure that the goals and

objectives for the Cherokee Watershed are addressed, provide support for student assistants, and be responsible for document management and the overall smooth running of the particulars of the project.

Linda Cole, Outreach Coordinator, has lived within the Cherokee Watershed for 25 years and has been an integral part of the local community by participating as a member in various programs and affiliations that work to enhance watershed management. For the past three years, Mrs. Cole has been part of the Education Committee for the Sacramento River Watershed Program and Director of the Valley Water Protection Association. As one of the founders of the Cherokee Watershed Group, she will provide assistance in coordinating the outreach and informational activities for the project.

Lynn Barris, Volunteer Coordinator, has been studying local and state groundwater issues since 1991. She is the Chair of the Board of Directors of Butte Environmental Council, the largest independent environmental organization north of Sacramento, established 21 years ago. She participates on the boards of Valley Water Protection Association, League of Women Voters of Butte County, and the Northern California Land Trust. She is a member of the Butte Creek Watershed Conservancy and actively involved with the Sacramento River Watershed Program. As the volunteer coordinator, Mrs. Barris will be responsible for coordinating the volunteers working for the project.

# VI. Compliance with Standard Terms and Conditions As a private non-profit the Cherokee Watershed Group has the following requirments: (1) non-discrimination compliance

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#### MONDISCRIMINATION COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

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CSU. Chico Research Foundation

The company named above (hereinafter referred to as "prospective contractor") hereby certifies, unless specifically exempted, compliance with Government Code Section 12990 (a-f) and California Code of Regulations, Title 2, Division 4, Chapter 5 in matters relating to reporting requirements and the development, implementation and maintenance of a Nondiscrimination Program. Prospective contractor agrees not to unlawfully discriminate, harass or allow harassment against any employee or applicant for employment because of sex, race, color, ancestry, religious creed, national origin, disability (including HIV and AIDS), medical condition (cancer), age, marital status, denial of family and medical care leave and denial of pregnancy disability leave.

#### CERTIFICATION

I, the official named below, hereby swear that I am duly authorized to legally bind the prospective contractor to the above described certification. I am fully aware that this certification, executed on the date and in the county below, is made under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California.

CFFICIAL'S NAME			
Jeff Wright	_		
CATE DECLIED		POSCUTED IN THE COUNTY OF	
- LAK Weel	(I)	Butte	
PROSPECTIVE CONTRACTOR'S INCUMBER	1977		
PROSPECTIVE CONTRACTOR'S TITLE	<del>                                     </del>		
Director, Office of	Sponsored Programs		
PROSPECTIVE CONTRACTOR'S LEGAL BUSINESS NAME			
CSU, Chico Research	Foundation		